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ABSTRACT

This book is the second to present the results on a study of how children's practice of speech, as shaped by family interaction, affects learning to talk. Participating in the study were 42 diverse families with young children. Each month for 2.5 years the interactions between 42 one- to two-year-olds and their parents were recorded as the children learned to talk. The book charts the monthly growth in children's vocabulary, utterances, and use of grammatical structures and describes the ambient conversation and changing patterns of parent-child interaction as the children's contribution to those exchanges increases. Supplementing the narrative are transcriptions from observed interactions and an extensive appendix listing more than 2,000 words of children's vocabulary from 11 to 36 months of age. The book concludes that the observational data revealed a lawful pattern of developmental change that gradually shifted the social world of an infant into that of a family of speakers. Two unexpected characteristics of parent-child interactions were the deliberate parental action to develop child language and the importance of the utterance children displayed to their parents in learning to talk. Implications of the findings for parents, speech-language intervention, and researchers are discussed. Contains approximately 150 references. (KB)

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